

**Introduction of the
Crosby-Puller Combat Wounds Compensation Act
October 8, 2004**

Mr. MARKEY: Mr. Speaker, today I am joined by 14 of my colleagues in introducing the “Crosby-Puller Combat Wounds Compensation Act,” a bill to remedy the lapse in support that a wounded soldier experiences from the moment he/she is evacuated from the combat zone for medical treatment. Although some of that support can eventually be restored if a soldier is discharged and applies under certain VA programs, this bill deals with the immediate burden placed on soldiers like James Crosby, a Marine who was seriously wounded while fighting for his country in Iraq. The bill has been named after James Crosby and, at his request, Lt. General Lewis “Chesty” Puller, USMC, the most decorated Marine in the history of the Corps.

Lance Corporal James Crosby of Winthrop, Massachusetts enlisted in the United States Marine Corps when he was 17 years old. He is married to Angela and was living in California before his service and his injury.

On March 18, 2004, James was wounded by enemy fire while riding on the back of a U.S. military vehicle in Iraq. A rocket fired at the vehicle killed the driver and injured two Marines including James. A piece of shrapnel pierced James’ side and penetrated his intestines and spine.

James was taken immediately to a hospital in Kuwait. He had his first operation there, was stabilized and finally flown to a U.S. military hospital in Landstuhl, Germany. In Germany, James underwent several surgeries to remove shrapnel and repair wounds. James’s wife, Angela, was flown to Germany to be with him during these difficult times. James was flown to Bethesda military hospital in Maryland in late March. Congressman Markey visited James in April at which time he received the Purple Heart. James eventually returned to Massachusetts and continued to receive care at the West Roxbury Veterans Hospital in Boston. He has lost over 50 pounds since his injury and requires a colostomy bag at all times. He has undergone 14 surgeries thus far, but remains paralyzed from the waist down.

The Boston Red Sox honored James on June 25, 2004 as he threw out the first pitch before a Red Sox-Phillies game at Fenway Park.

James’s pay was immediately cut when he was transported out of the combat zone in Iraq. While serving the U.S. Marine Corps in Iraq, James received his base pay as well as Combat Zone Tax Exclusion (CZTE), Imminent Danger Pay (IDP), Hardship Duty pay (HDP), Per Diem and Flight Pay. He also lost his Family Separation Allowance (FSA) once he returned to the United States for medical care. The tax exclusion and pays amounted to more than \$1,000 per month. James is now still a member of the Marine Corps and has not yet been discharged. He is not entitled to Veterans benefits until he is officially discharged. James was being paid about \$2,500 a month while serving in Iraq, but now is only receiving \$1,300 a month.

He has relied on family and friends to help him pay for a handicapped accessible apartment as well as daily expenses, because his current military pay of \$1,300 a month does not cover all of his expenses. James has also been helped by the Shutt Detachment, an association of former Marines, which held a fundraiser for him on August 19 at the Rack in Boston. Without the help of family, friends, and former Marines; James and his young wife would not be able to afford an apartment in the Greater Boston Area and cover expenses.

James eagerly wants to work to help other members of our nation's armed services that are in a similar situation. He and his family have worked with my office to address in this legislation the problems that they have experienced, first hand, in coping with wounds incurred in James's service to his country. I urge my colleagues to join us in ensuring that members of the Armed Forces that are wounded while serving in a combat zone will continue to receive certain special pays, tax exclusions and allowances associated with such service until the member recovers from the wound or injury.

Thank you.